



DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS
VA Connecticut Healthcare System
950 Campbell Avenue
West Haven, CT 06516

February 20, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you regarding Breed Specific Legislation or, BSL. I am a physician practicing in the New Haven area, a Clinical Professor at Yale University. I first encountered BSL while researching what kind of dog I would like to get after my beloved greyhound passed away. The qualities I was looking for were intelligence, size (smaller than our Greater Swiss Mt dog) and rugged so the dog would be able to accompany me on my frequent hikes in the White Mountains and over nights on the Appalachian trail.

Pretty quickly this dog called "pit bull" attracted my attention. One of the first things I came to understand was that there is no "pit bull" breed. It is really a descriptive term used to characterize dogs with a muscular body, big head, short coat and thin tail. Many dog breeds, including but not exclusive of the Staffordshire Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, American Pit Bull Terrier and sometimes the Cane Corso and Presa Canario can be characterized as "pit bulls". Lumping all these dogs together is no different really than saying that all people with dark skin are African American.

My research has shown me that when BSL is enacted, education for law enforcers is spent on teaching them how to recognize this non-existent "pit bull". Rather than utilizing precious resources to educate about dog behavior/temperament and how to manage potential volatile situations, they are schooled in how to identify dogs that are frequently no more than someone's family pet.

The dog I chose to bring into my family was surrendered to a high kill shelter in NYC. Luckily for both of us, he was found by a CT rescue group. Not encumbered by any BSL, I was able to open my home to this friendly, playful, whip smart little guy that is a fabulous companion. He loves everything he meets and will one day make a fabulous therapy dog.

We need to nip BSL in the bud. We know better than to judge humans by the way they look. We owe it to "man's best friend" to treat him with the same regard!

Sincerely,

Dr Kathleen Lazzarini